

September 1996

You Gotta Go To School For That?

Jerry Seay
College of Charleston

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Seay, Jerry (1996) "You Gotta Go To School For That?," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 8: Iss. 4, Article 40.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2087>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

You Gotta Go to School for That?

Librarians, Mexico, and the Titanic

by Jerry Seay (College of Charleston) <seayt@edisto.edu>



Working in a library with all of its attendant glory, adventure, and daily gut wrenching, nail biting, seat of your pants excitement sometimes leaves one wishing for a more sedate, easy-going, routine lifestyle. You bloodied veterans of the library trenches understand all to well the daily adventure of navigating desperate patrons through tangled databases, Internet jungles, and obscurely cataloged ultra-fiche texts in that unending quest for knowledge. Sometimes you just pine for a simpler life; or at least a different one. You have probably asked yourself, "What else could I be doing?" Well, you could be building the Titanic in Mexico. You could be my brother Johnny.

As the three regular readers of this column will recall, my brother (Motto: try everything at least once) is a metal fabricator/welder who used to build submarines for General Dynamics before the "peace dividend" ended a promising career in the military-industrial complex. He then went to College for a semester to make millions as a computer technician,

then got hired by a different civilian contractor building big ships, then built a monorail for another company before building some more big ships. Then his wife abruptly took his car and his money and left him and his dog died.


Even a hardened librarian, weathered by sudden database updates and journal name changes, may have been troubled by such a tragic turn of personal fortune. Certainly the death of one's dog can leave one devastated, to say nothing of the potential setback a runaway wife can cause. Brother Johnny, though admittedly concerned about the apparent negative tone set by these events, was nevertheless hopeful that at least things could not get any worse.

His eternal optimism was rewarded within two weeks when an old friend who worked for 20th Century Fox called him. It seems they were building the set for the upcoming movie "The Titanic" and needed experienced fabricator crew bosses. Employing his eternal axiom "what do I have to lose," brother Johnny immediately accepted, told his current employer "hasta la vista," and boarded a plane for Mexico. Johnny is now living in a trailer on the beach just south of Tijuana helping to construct a full-scale replica of the S. S. Titanic for a 20th Century Fox movie set.

Now, difficult as it is to imagine, there are those librarians who just might be a bit envious of such a job. Despite the fact that the work is 7 days a week, 12 hours a day, I myself have briefly wondered if I could give up my current life of adventure to live on a beach and work on a movie set. Then I realize with a hearty grin that, even though my brother will make more money in 6 months that I'll see in two years, the joy I receive from the investigation and discovery of pure knowledge and the molding of young minds far outweighs any possible material gain.


My advice to battle-weary librarians contemplating a life lesser than the noble calling of librarianship: It just don't get any better than this. Sure there are jobs out there with more money and greater prestige. But, hey, not everyone can be a publisher! Besides, who needs money and prestige when one can be a navigator for an information overloaded, confused society? Are there any more powerful than we? I think not.

I rest my case.

By the way, if anybody out there has a friend at 20th Century Fox, I have this nifty idea for a movie about unsinkable libraries, savage attractions, exploding book trucks, secret hair buns and such. Well, they might need a librarian you know! 

From the Other Side of the Street from page 63

widespread photocopying and duplication of audio tapes. But I believe systematic abuse can be largely stemmed. First, we must repeatedly and clearly articulate copyright ownership. (In the SCAN project, for example, a fairly lengthy discussion of what is and is not permissible appears as the first screen of any downloaded document.) Next, we need to make it easy and cheap to do the right thing. Most people will want to comply if it isn't difficult to do so. By the end of 1997, secure commerce over the Net will be widespread. It will be easy to charge a reasonable amount for downloading an article or chapter. Most people will choose to pay the fee and obtain the fully authenticated copy, rather than running the risk of obtaining a corrupted version from a friend. The Copyright Clearance Center also has a pilot project in electronic delivery of rights-cleared materials. <See the CCC homepage at URL: <http://www.copyright.com>>. Copyright concerns won't go away, but they won't be so overwhelming as to freeze development on the Internet.

Finally, I believe that the strategic partnerships that we are undertaking in electronic publishing — collaborations with libraries, publishers, and scholarly societies — will enrich our publishing operations, beyond the success or failure of the electronic projects themselves. Collaborating closely over time with individuals representing key markets can only enhance publishers' overall understanding of and responsiveness to those markets. 

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

79 ACADEMIC PRESS	25 IBD
74 ALPER	60 INPUT CULTURE
7 AMBASSADOR	2 JAEGER
31 AIP	81 LANDENSCHIEDT
87 AMERITECH	73 MAJORS
63 AMIGOS	59 MCGRAW-HILL
5 ATG	88 MIDWEST LIBRARY SERVICE
83 AUBREY BOOKS	48 OPEN HORIZONS
63 AUX AMATEURS DE LIVRES	47 PRIMARY SOURCE MEDIA
27 BAKER & TAYLOR	80 READMORE
3 BLACKWELL NA	57 REED REFERENCE
15 BOOK HOUSE	13 ROWECOM
65 BRODART	9 SWETS
86 CASALINI	75 TAYLOR & FRANCIS
77 COUTTS	61 UNCOVER
28 EASTERN BOOK	44,45 VAN NOSTRAND REINHOLD
67 EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES	39,49 WILEY
41 GREENWOOD	11 YBP

Ads Manager: Edna Laughrey Internet: elaughrey@aol.com
phone: 313-429-1029, fax: 313-429-1711
Executive Support Services, 740 Woodland Drive, Saline, MI 48176